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SOUTH MOLTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND THE

Sanitary Inspector

FOR THE

Year ended December 31st, 1948.

F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S.(Eng.), L.R.C.P.(Lond), D.P.H.(Oxon),
Medical Officer of Health.

Printed by S. W. LYDDON at the Tower Printing Works, South Molton.

113, *East Street,*

South Molton,

June, 1949.

To the Chairman and Members of the

South Molton Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Council.

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Administration of your District for the year 1948.

Your obedient Servant,

F. J. H. MARTIN,

M.R.C.S.(Eng.), L.R.C.P.(Lond.), D.P.H.(Oxon).

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE SOUTH MOLTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the year ended December 31st, 1948

LIST OF STAFF.

The Staff of the Public Health Department consists of :—

Part-time Officers :—

F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S.(Eng.) L.R.C.P.(Lond.), D.P.H.(Oxon)
Medical Officer of Health.

MRS. ELWORTHY, Clerk.

Whole-time Officers :—

A. G. OXLAND, L.R.I.B., A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.,
Sanitary Inspector.

L. W. EVES, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.,
Additional Sanitary Inspector.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area in acres	117,432
Population (Registrar General's Figures) ...	8,872
Inhabited Houses	2,875
Rateable Value	£29,028
Sum represented by a penny rate	£122. 14s. 2d.

Vital Statistics.

	Males	Females	Total
LIVE BIRTHS—Legitimate ...	65	74	139
Illegtimate ...	3	1	4
			143

Rate per 1,000 population - 16·1

	Males	Females	Total
STILL BIRTHS—Legitimate ...	4	2	6
Illegitimate ...	0	0	0
			6

Rate per 1,000 total Live and Still Births - 40·2

	Males	Females	Total
DEATHS	47	41	88

Death rate per 1,000 population - 9·9

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

Puerperal Sepsis	0
Other Puerperal Causes	0

Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	1	0	1
			4

Rate per 1,000 Live Births - - - 27·9

Legitimate Infants per 1,000 Live Births - 20·9

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age) ...	0

The following Table shows the comparative figures for South Molton Rural District and England and Wales :—

Rate per 1,000 population.			Death Rate per 1,000	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	
	Live Births	Still Births		Deaths under 1 year	Deaths from Diarrhœa and Enteritis under 2 years
South Molton R.D. ...	16·1	·67	9·9	27·9	0
England and Wales ...	17·9	·42	10·8	34	3·3

Causes of Death.

	Males	Females
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	1	0
Syphilitic Diseases	1	0
Cancer of Oerophagus	1	0
Cancer of Breast	0	3
Cancer of all other Sites	3	2
Diabetes	1	0
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	5	5
Heart Disease	15	16
Other Diseases of Ciculatory System ...	2	2
Bronchitis	4	0
Pneumonia	1	5
Other Resperatory Diseases	0	1
Appendicitis	1	0
Nephitis	1	0
Premature Births	1	1
Congenital Malformation	1	0
Road Traffic Accident	1	0
Other Violent Causes	1	1
All other Causes	7	5
TOTALS -	47	41

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified in 1948

(in age groups excluding Tuberculosis).

AGE Years	MEASLES Males	MEASLES Females	WHOOPING COUGH Males	WHOOPING COUGH Females	SCARLET FEVER Males	SCARLET FEVER Females
0 - 1 ...	3	—	1	—	—	—
1 - 2 ...	5	4	—	—	—	—
2 - 3 ...	3	5	1	—	—	—
3 - 4 ...	6	3	—	1	—	—
4 - 5 ...	7	7	—	2	—	—
5 -10 ...	37	49	2	1	2	1
10 -15 ...	21	14	1	2	—	—
15 -20 ...	6	6	—	—	—	1
20 -25 ...	2	2	—	—	—	—
25 -30 ...	—	1	—	—	—	—
30 -35 ...	1	1	—	—	—	—
35 -40 ...	1	—	1	—	—	—
40 -45 ...	2	—	1	—	—	—
55 -60 ...	2	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS -	96	92	7	6	2	2

There was 1 case of Pneumonia, a Male aged 56.

Below I append a Table showing the distribution of Infectious Diseases notified during 1948 (excluding Tuberculosis).

	MEASLES	WHOOPING COUGH	SCARLET FEVER	PNEUMONIA
Bishop's Nympton	11	—	—	—
Burrington ...	12	—	—	—
Chittlehampton ...	56	1	—	—
Chittlehamholt ...	5	—	3	—
East Buckland ...	2	—	—	—
Filleigh	—	2	—	—
Knowstone ...	8	—	—	—
Meshaw	1	—	—	—
Molland	9	—	—	—
North Molton ...	12	9	—	—
Rackenford ...	2	—	1	—
Rose Ash ...	7	—	—	—
Satterleigh ...	1	—	—	—
Warkleigh ...	9	—	—	—
West Buckland ...	18	—	—	1
West Anstey ...	2	—	—	—
Worlington ...	1	—	—	—
Witheridge ...	32	—	—	—
Twitchen	—	1	—	—
TOTALS - -	188	13	4	1

Witheridge suffered from a severe outbreak of Measles in October, 1948, and the School was closed for a fortnight.

Tuberculosis.

New Cases of Tuberculosis notified in 1948, showing Sex and Age Group.

Age.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
3	...	1	—	—	—
12	...	—	—	1	—
17	...	1	—	—	—
27	...	—	1	—	—
34	...	1	—	—	—
	Totals -	3	1	1	—

General Provisions of Health Services in the Area.

HOSPITALS.

1. TUBERCULOSIS.

Hawley Sanitorium, situated in the Borough of Barnstaple, has 28 beds.

2. MATERNITY CARE.

The Devon County Council is continuing to act as they did in 1947, as Agents of the Regional Hospital Board, until the Board has completed its own plans for the treatment of Maternity cases.

The South Molton Cottage Hospital is functioning as usual, and is now under the North Devon Hospital Group, and deals with a certain number of Maternity cases.

There is also a Ward of 15 beds, with a fully-qualified staff, at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, available for cases of doubt or difficulty.

3. ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The Tiverton Isolation Hospital is closed and the cases are now sent to the Bideford Isolation Hospital, which is situated just outside the Borough of Bideford. It is of recent construction and well-equipped in every way for the treatment of Infectious Diseases. It comprises 32 beds (six of which are in observation cubicles) and four cots.

4. SMALL POX.

The Small Pox Hospital to which any cases of Small Pox will be sent is the Swilley Isolation Hospital, Plymouth, and the ambulance will be obtained from Tiverton.

5. GENERAL.

The South Molton Cottage Hospital, situated in the Borough, serves the Area. There are 13 beds for Medical, Surgical and Maternity Cases.

The North Devon Infirmary, situated in Barnstaple, also serves the Area and provides modern Medical and Surgical treatment.

In South Molton there are 29 beds available at Beech House for the Chronic Sick.

A Blood Bank has been established at North Devon Infirmary.

6. CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

V.D. CLINIC.—This is held at the Annex of the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple.

SESSIONS.

	Females.	*Males.*
Mondays -	4.0 p.m.	5.15 p.m.
Thursdays -	4.30 p.m.	5.45 p.m.

TUBERCULOSIS CLINIC held at North Devon Infirmary.

SESSIONS.

Tuesdays -	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. 2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.	Clinic and X-ray Examinations.
Thursdays -	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. 2.0 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	
Fridays -	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. 2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.	A.P. refils.

7. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOMES.

There are 8 District Nurses in the area.

8. MIDWIVES.

13 Midwives have notified their intention to practice in the South Molton Rural District.

9. LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The Laboratory is situated at 7, Dix's Field, Exeter, and is in charge of Dr. Moore. It is completely installed with the necessary equipment for bacteriological examinations of all kinds. Its Diagnostic and Consultative Services are available for all patients, and it undertakes the Analysis of Drinking Water and Milk.

This Service is extremely valuable and is widely used by the Medical Practitioners in your District.

10. AMBULANCE SERVICE.

Under Sec. 27 of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the Local Health Authority (*i.e.* the Devon County Council) is responsible for the provision of an Ambulance Service, and the Devon Health Committee have arranged for this to be provided through the Agency of the St. John Ambulance Association. Under the scheme, an Ambulance Post has been established at South Molton, which is staffed by volunteers. The District served is South Molton and South Molton Rural District.

I desire to thank Mr. Willey and Mr. Oxland for the help they have given me during the year.

F. J. H. MARTIN.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR AND SURVEYOR FOR THE SOUTH MOLTON RURAL AREA

For year ended 31st December, 1948.

Water.

It is understood that progress has been made in the carrying out of the North Devon Water Scheme by the North Devon Water Board, although in this area no works have as yet been executed. It is hoped that the completion of the first instalment of the Water Board's Scheme will be expedited as much as possible as most of the troublesome places in this area are proposed to be covered by this first instalment.

During the past year we have had our usual troubles with water supplies, and a detailed statement in respect of each of the piped supplies is given hereunder :—

CHULMLEIGH.—This Township is supplied by means of a piped supply which is derived from a collecting area some little distance outside the town supplemented by means of a borehole. The yield during the dry periods of the year is greatly diminised and the borehole for the past few years has shown signs of a considerable diminishing yield, and it has been necessary to restrict consumption by turning the supply off from the town for varying periods according to the time of the year, but generally between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. daily. The water, both from the callecting area and the borehole contains iron in solution in considerable quantities and aeration, sedimentation and slow sand filtration is resorted to for the removal of this, which is done quite successfully. The raw water has a plumbo solvent action and before being passed into the mains, it is made to flow through a neutralizing chamber where the p.H. value is raised to a satisfactory degree. Tests of the p.H. value are made periodically.

WITHERIDGE.— With the erection of 22 houses by the Council at Witheridge, some alteration in the means of distribution has had to be made, as the reservoir was not suffiently elevated to supply the additional requirements. Water is now pumped from Woodford Moor to an overhead tank at a sufficient elevation from whence it gravitates to the new houses, any overflow going to the reservoir. The consumption, however, and the capacity of the tank, which

are limiting factors acconts for practically the whole of the water derived from Woodford Moor and there is little from this source, which passes into the reservoir. In addition to the new houses, other houses owned by the Council on the site of the tank, are fed from this source, and the introduction of the North Devon Water Scheme will remove a considerable amount of anxiety with regard to this supply. The only treatment undertaken is that necessary to raise the p.H. value of the water from Woodford Moor.

KINGSNYMPTON.—At Kingsnympton it is still necessary to convey water from other sources, which is deposited into the reservoir and fed to the village by means of the mains. This is undertaken at a huge cost and here again the North Devon Scheme is looked forward to in this village with considerable enthusiam. The water being carted is mainly derived from the Borough of South Molton, and no treatment of this nor of the very small quantity being derived from the borehole is undertaken. The supply is not only deficient in the dry months of the year, but the whole year around.

RACKENFORD.—Similar conditions to Kingsnympton exist at Rackenford, where the original source of supply was a borehole and here the North Devon Water Board have undertaken the carriage of water to this place, mostly from Tiverton.

Several local schemes have been under consideration for supplying this village prior to the bringing of the water from the main sources which will supply the North Devon Area, in an effort to overcome the huge expense of carrying water, but nothing of a practical nature has as yet been done.

BISHOPSNYMPTON.—Water to this village is derived from a borehole which up to the time of writing has met all the demands of the consumers. The water contains iron in solution, which is removed by aeration, sedimentation and slow sand filtration.

NORTH MOLTON.—The supply at North Molton during this year has caused no anxiety, and it has not been necessary as in the previous year to restrict consumption.

The service reservior being constructed is nearing completion and will soon be brought into operation.

The need for this emanates from the fact that at the source originally, nothing but a very small tank was provided as the yield from the springs at that time was more than sufficient to satisfy the demands. Since then, however, it has been noticed that whilst the tank has been empty during the day to satisfy requirements, during the night an overflow would be running to waste. With the new service reservoir which is of adequate capacity, this will be avoided.

The water is derived from springs on Exmoor and no treatment is necessary or undertaken.

BRAYFORD.—The scheme promoted for the better utilization of the water for this village which is in the Parish of Charles, is nearing completion, and with its completion, the difficulties previously experienced in meeting the demands will it is anticipated be removed. The water is derived from a spring and no treatment is necessary nor undertaken.

CHITTLEHAMPTON.—During the year considerable trouble has been experienced with the supply to this village owing to bacterial contamination. The supply is a private one, provided initially by an Estate to supply their own properties. Subsequent extensions have had the result of a considerable number of the inhabitants having reliance on this supply.

During the dry months of the year a decrease in the yield was felt so much so that some of the houses on the supply were deprived of it entirely. The Estate made efforts to increase the supply with the result that contaminated water was taken in. When this was discovered it was taken out of the supply again, and weekly examinations have been made, which have varied considerably and consumers have been advised to boil all water before use. The position is being closely watched, but here again, no permanent solution will be had until the North Devon Water Board are enabled to bring a supply to this village from the sources they will have under their control.

GENERALLY.—The remainder of the district relies for its supply on small Estate Schemes and Wells.

10 samples of water were taken during the year, particulars of which are as follows :—

2 samples from privately owned supplies, one of which was satisfactory and one unsatisfactory.

A sample from the river at Rackenford for a report on the degree of purification necessary if the water was brought in to the piped supply.

A sample from an Estate Supply proposed to be used for housing purposes, which was satisfactory.

Six samples from the Chittlehampton Supply, the difficulties concerning which supply have been mentioned earlier in the report, all of which were unsatisfactory.

No samples other than those mentioned above were taken from piped supplies as there was nothing to indicate any conditions which would reverse previous results.

No contamination of the publicly owned piped supplies has arisen necessitating any special action.

The table set out below shows the number of houses connected directly to the public mains, the estimated number of the population served by this means, the number of houses served by standpipes and the estimated number of the population served thereby.

Parish	Number of Houses supplied direct from Public Mains	Population supplied direct from Public Main Est.	Number of houses served by standpipes from Public Mains Est.	Population served by Standpipes Est.
North Molton	143	430	35	105
Chulmleigh	228	680	1	2
Kingsnympton	59	177	1	2
Bishopsnympton	50	155	18	55
Rackenford	29	87	—	—
Witheridge	94	280	45	130
Total	603	1809	100	294

Particulars of work in connection with water supplies carried out during the year are as follows :—

Number of inspections carried out in connection with private supplies ...	63
Number of visits to and inspections of public water supplies	92
Number of water supplies taken into houses from public mains	8
Number of new water supplies introduced to houses, other than from public mains	28
Number of cases in which the water supply to houses derived other than from public mains have been improved	9

Drainage and Sewerage.

Apart from sewers laid to cater for new housing schemes, no works of Sewerage or Sewage Disposal have been carried out during the year. Twenty-eight inspections of Sewage Disposal Works have been carried out during the year. Particulars of drainage work carried out during the year are as follows:—

Number of new drains laid	16
Number of extensions to drains laid ...	4
Number of drains cleared	4

It has not yet been found possible to proceed with the many schemes of Sewerage and Sewage Disposal which are required in the district.

Closet Accommodation.

Number of new closets constructed ...	19
Number of earth closets converted to water closets	16
Number of new closet pans fixed ...	18
Number of flushing cisterns provided ...	18

Public Cleansing

At the end of the year. refuse was collected by contract in the following places and deposited in local dumps, viz:—West Buckland, Chittlehampton, North Molton, Chulmleigh, Witheridge, Bishopsnympton and Georgenympton.

During the year consideration has been given to a Scheme having for its object the collection of refuse from all the villages and hamlets in the area. It is not intended that this scheme shall make provision for the collection of refuse from all inhabited houses, but in the course of travel from place to place occupied houses en route will be catered for. The scheme is due to commence on January 1st and the refuse will be deposited in one central tip, where a measure of controlled tipping will be practised. By degrees the existing dumps will be cleaned up or covered and closed.

Scavenging of streets is practised at Chulmleigh and Witheridge

Nuisances

Five nuisances have come to the notice of the department during the year and they were all dealt with by informal action, abatement having been obtained.

Eradication of Bed Bugs

No premises were found to be infested with bed bugs.

Infectious Diseases.
Disinfection and Disinfestation.

The number of premises disinfected as the result of notifiable diseases was four.

One house was disinfected as a result of other diseases, and no premises were found to be in need of disinfestation.

Inspection & Supervision of Food, Cowsheds & Dairies

Fifty-six inspections of cowsheds and dairies were made during the year, and continued improvement in these is taking place. A considerable number of sheds have been re-modelled or otherwise brought up to date, and the standard of cowsheds in the district has greatly improved of late years.

Slaughterhouses

No Slaughterhouses in the district are in use.

Meat

117 lbs. of English and 52 lbs. Imported Butcher's Meat were condemned during the year, as a result of bone taint.

Canned Foods

The following canned foods were condemned :—

Peaches	4 cans
Loganberries	1 can
Plums	4 cans
Grapefruit	5 ,,
Pineapple	1 can
Grapes	5 cans
Peas	3 ,,
Beans in Tomato Sauce	20 ,,
Beetroot	1 can
Milk	21 cans
Pilchards	4 ,,
Salmon	4 ,,
Sardines	2 ,,
Herrings in Tomato	2 ,,
Soup	7 ,,
Mixed Vegetables	1 can

CANNED FOODS (continued).

Spinach	17 cans
Spaghetti	1 can
Jam	1 „
Marmalade	3 cans
Stewed Steak	1 can
Beef Loaf	2 cans
Veal Loaf	1 can
Luncheon Meat	1 can

Other Foods.

Apples	50 lbs.
Flour	3 „

Bakehouses.

There are twelve bakehouses in the district which have been kept in a satisfactory condition and no complaints have been received concerning them.

Factories.

No defects were found in any factories and the premises of outworkers inspected, were satisfactory.

Housing.

Eight houses were completed during the year by the Council and five by private enterprise.

The following schemes were in course of execution at the end of the year :—

Bishopsnympton	12 houses.
Brayford	8 „
West Buckland	6 „

Tenders were approved for the erection of six houses at Chittlehamholt, four at Filleigh, and four at Umberleigh.

At the moment we are experiencing difficulty in getting Contractors to tender for our houses and eight at Rackenford and four at Molland found no successful tender. The Council have decided to defer any action in connection with Mollard, but for the eight houses at Rackenford, negotiations are proceeding with a Contractor with a view to the submission of an acceptable tender.

The number of visits and inspections to existing houses totalled 179, and the number of cases where repairs were obtained by informal action was 94.

Two Statutory Notices were served for the execution of works under the Housing & Public Health Acts, both of which were complied with.

Building Licensing.

With the raising of the free limit, this work has considerably decreased and during the year the number of applications for building licences was 162 of which 155 were granted and 7 refused.

A. G. OXLAND, L.R.I.B.A., A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.,
Sanitary Surveyor & Inspector.